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The Later 1960s

1968 Student protests, labor unrest, Center–Left coalition governments
1969 Bombing of bank at Piazza Fontana in Milan opens autunno caldo protests and *anni di piombo* (leaden years) terrorist period in Italy

Not since the days of D'Annunzio's takeover of Fiume and Fascism's identification with songs of *Giovinezza* (Youth) during the 1920s had a youth movement so determined cultural and political change in Italy. In 1962 compulsory education was extended to age 14 and entrance restrictions to state universities were eased. With the demographic increase of the postwar baby boom, the result was overcrowding. Italian universities were built and designed to serve far fewer students than were attending by the 1960s. Furthermore, in the rebellious spirit of the times the education system in Italy was interpreted as having decreasing applications in the technical economy and a decreasing relevance within the context of consumer driven popular culture.

The student and youth rebellions centering on the year 1968 actually occurred throughout the West and should not be considered as national events but part of an international demographic phenomenon. In the West, by 1968, much of the offspring of the generation that had suffered through the 1930s economic depression and World War II reached physical and emotional adolescence with attitudes formed by the postwar peace ensured by a standing army in Europe from the United States. The idealism fostered by this protected environment came into contact with the realities of the shortcomings of a world that in the first half of the twentieth century had produced two world wars, a Holocaust, and was continuing to struggle with the legacy of colonialism.

The demographic changes were accompanied by changes in industrial working conditions. In northern Italy, waves of strikes and factory occupations by workers erupted in the fall of 1968, later referred to as the "Hot autumn" as Italian wages were still low by European standards. During this period, the radical leftist political parties such as *Autonomia Operaia* attempted to establish a constituency among Italy's working classes. The governing establishment reacted to the strife by granting concessions. Parliament proposed social legislation on pensions, healthcare, and workers rights laws, which anticipated demands from the Left. A divorce law was passed through popular referendum in 1975 in recognition of societal changes and a growing Italian feminist movement.

As in the rest of Europe and North America, the demographic boom was accompanied by a rise in youth culture perhaps best understood by the efforts of singers and songwriters influenced by Anglo-American pop music. Italian singer songwriters such as Adriano Celentano, Lucio Battisti, Fabrizio De Andre, Giorgio Gaber, and Lucio Dalla developed an indigenous Italian voice in popular culture. Part of the exuberance of the 1960s was a desire to break social, religious, and especially sexual boundaries taking advantage of the diffusion of oral contraception and decisive, if temporary, medical advances against venereal diseases. Irrationalism in art reached the point of Piero Manzoni's accurately entitled *Merda d'artista/Artist's Excrement* (1961) taking the technical achievements of world renowned masters such as Renato Guttuso and Piero Guccione to surrealistic hyperbole.

The Italian literary scene was still dominated by figures who had matured during the Fascist era and used their postwar freedoms to examine Italian life in a highly detached narrative style, as in the case of Natalia Ginzburg, or in a satirizing tone, as in the case of Alberto Moravia, Dacia Maraini, and Paolo Volponi. There were also writers who spoke the language of a rebellious era, for examples, Alberto Bevilacqua and Giuseppe Pontiggia. But literary influences were no longer limited to high literature but also extended to comic books such as the *Corto Maltese* series by internationally renowned Venetian author Hugo Pratt (1927–95). Other exponents of Italian comic art included Bonelli and Galeppini's *Tex Willer* series, Angela and Luciana Giussani's *Diabolik* (1962), Tiziano Sclavi's *Dylan Dog* (1986), and the erotically charged work of Manilo Manaro admired by Fellini. Although the most widely distributed newspaper in Italy in the postwar period has been the pink papered sports daily *Gazzetta dello sport*, there was a sustained influence of journalists such as Enzo Biagi, Giorgio Bocca, Oriana Fallaci, and Indro Montanelli who wrote books containing cultural and political commentary.

The cultural experimentation of the 1960s extended to the Italian theater with the rise of an experimental avant garde theater by Carmelo Bene or Luca Ronconi, although other figures for examble, Giorgio Strehler (1921–97), worked to maintain the traditional formats of the *commedia dell'arte*. Influential theatrical performers of the period included Dario Fo (1926–) and his wife Franca Rame, who revived the tradition of the *giullare di piazza* (town square clown) with performances, at times censored on Italian television, which harkened back to the tradition of medieval improvisational performers who poked fun at official power. Fo's theatrical pieces *Morte accidentale di un anarchico/Accidental Death of an Anarchist* and *Non tutti i ladri vengono per nuocere/Not all Thieves Come to do harm*—expressed the iconoclastic spirit of the 1960s. Fo would continue his irreverent takes on Italian culture with one-man performances on the lives of Saint Francis, Leonardo da Vinci, and Caravaggio. Fo was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1997.

The cinema club circuit that developed in countries, as in France as the informal educational setting for directors of the French New Wave, also appeared in Italy by the late 1960s and 1970s. Cinema clubs and *cineforum* became an important part of the development of a cinematic culture in Italy. Future directors

Roberto Benigni and Nanni Moretti, for example, gained ideas about cinema in the revival theaters of 1970s Rome. The development of a canon of films as required viewing also incited comic reactions. In the second of Luciano Salce's long-running *Fantozzi* comedy series featuring Paolo Villaggio *Il secondo tragico Fantozzi* (1976), the oppressed accountant Fantozzi expressed the divide between public tastes and art cinema by courageously standing up in a crowd of his coworkers at a forced viewing of Eisenstein's seminal *Battleship Potymkin* (1925), to announce in the best tradition of *commedia dell'arte* irreverence that the foundational film of formalist montage was actually "a *cagata pazzesca* (an insane bowel movement)."

Italian philosophers and intellectuals contributed to the cultural moment of what would become effimerally defined as postmodernism. University professor Umberto Eco (1932–) wrote on the differences between traditional readings and interpretations of art and the avant garde as open versus closed systems. Eco gave nontraditional subjects due respect as cultural phenomena. He wrote widely read semiotic analyses of the spy and television quiz shows. Eco's writings have been an important influence on contemporary media studies. Eco achieved worldwide fame with his first novel *The Name of the Rose* (1980) later adapted to film starring Sean Connery in 1986. Eco's novel combined his interest in popular forms like the detective novel with his training in medieval philosophy—Eco's university thesis had been on the scholastic philosophy of St. Thomas. Like Eco, novelist and cultural theoretician Italo Calvino (1923–85) gained fame through his novels first in the neorealist style *Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno/The Path to the Spiders' Nests* (1947) then in magic realism and fables *Cosmicomiche*.

Art Cinema

The commercial success of the Italian film industry in the 1960s extended to art cinema. French theorists, for example, Andrè Bazin and his disciples such as Francois Truffaut of the *Nouvelle Vague* (New Wave), arrived at the *auteur* theory of film appreciation, which interprets films as the work and the product of the artistic vision of a single author (*auteur* in French) or *cinema d'autore* in Italian. Certain directors (John Ford, Nicolas Ray, Jean Renoir, Roberto Rossellini, Orson Welles, etc.) were anointed as *auteurs* in recognition of their artistic abilities. Of course cinema is actually a collective enterprise of an entire industrial apparatus. Individual directors rarely enjoy enough financial production control in order to impose a single artistic vision. Nevertheless given European cultural heritage, film critics were able to advance the idea that cinema was an expression of the latest European avant garde. In 1958, French critic Andrè Bazin wrote about neorealism and films like Rossellini's *Paisan* in terms that inspired a generation of filmmakers to strive for the essential power of the neorealist style. However, by the mid-1960s, there was a reaction against the legacy of neorealism even by the directors who had made it famous. The films about the heroic resistance struggle of WWII gave way to films in which directors examined about more personal issues, reflective of a peacetime Europe with a growing economy.[1]

Roberto Rossellini

In the 1950s, Rossellini made films that had a somewhat quixotic and Catholic message such as *Francesco giullare di Dio/The Flowers of St. Francis* (1950) starring Aldo Fabrizi and *La macchina ammazzacattivi/The Machine that Kills Bad People* (1952), but both films performed poorly at the box office. He made more dramatically themed films with a similar message about spiritual realization with Hollywood star Ingrid Bergman—*Stromboli terra di Dio/Stromboli* (1948), *Europa '51*(1952), *Viaggio in Italia/Voyage to Italy* (1953), and *Giovanna d'Arco al rogo/Joan of Arc* (1954). Rossellini adapted the Catholic ideology of his early postwar films, *Roma città aperta/Open City* or *Germania anno zero/Germany Year Zero*, to the art cinema genre where moral questions were posed at a personal level, rather than in the context of the cataclysmic events of WWII. Rossellini had displayed a set of precise techniques that would become foundational to art cinema; long shots to induce spectator speculation about a character's psychological makeup and narratives without the sort of closure and happy ending that characterized Hollywood cinema in particular.

In the 1950s, public interest in Rossellini's personal life actually took precedence over his films. The already married Swedish actress Bergman reportedly wrote Rossellini a note after having seen *Open City*. The ensuing relationship between Rossellini and Bergman and their subsequent children, including actress Isabella Rossellini, made the couple a fixture in the tabloids during an era when divorce was not legal in Italy. The vicissitudes of Rossellini's personal life made for good press such as the furious reaction of his girlfriend Anna Magnani to the news of Bergman's arrival in Rome. Magnani jealously insisted on making an American produced film *Vulcano* (1949) directed by William Dieterle, near from Rossellini's production of *Stromboli* (1949) starring Ingrid Bergman.

Rossellini seemed to abandon the art cinema genre after his adaptation of a Stendhal novel *Vanina Vanini/The Betrayer* (1961) and his contribution to the multi-director episodic film *Ro.Go.Pag* (1963). In his later career Rossellini became increasingly interested in the educational possibility of films and made the documentaries *India* (1960) and dramatizations of moments in Italian history such as the Resistance drama starring Vittorio De Sica *Il Generale della Rovere/General Della Rovere* (1959) scripted by Indro Montanelli and *Viva Italia!/Garibaldi* (1960) about Garibaldi's campaigns of the *Risorgimento*. Rossellini also made educational films for television such as *Iron Age* (1964), *Rise of Louis XIV* (1966), *Acts of the Apostles* (1969), *Socrates* (1970), *Blaise Pascal* (1971), *Agostino Depretis d'Ippotona/Augustine of Hippo* (1972), *L'età di Cosimo de Medici/The Age of Cosimo de'Medici* (1973), *Cartesius* (1974). Toward the end of his life Rossellini held a brief appointment at the *Scuola Nazionale di Cinematografia* in Rome. Unfortunately, according to actor and director Carlo Verdone, then a student at the CSC, Rossellini, the master of neorealism whose style had inspired oppositional cinemas around the world, including the French New Wave, had difficulty conducting his courses due to the political exuberance of students during the 1960s counterculture protests.

Luchino Visconti

In 1960, Visconti made the emigration drama *Rocco e i suoi fratelli/Rocco and His Brothers* (1960), a film that combined the neorealist tone of common man stories with a sense of *avant garde* exploration of interpersonal relations. Visconti updates the story of Sicilian fishermen from *La terra trema/The Earth Trembles* (1948) to a tale of contemporary Lucanian immigrants alienated by industrial Milan in a film that has become a canonical example of Italian art cinema.

Visconti's next film, *Il Gattopardo/The Leopard* (1963), is an adaptation of the bestselling novel by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa (1896–57) about a Sicilian Prince who must relinquish power and status after Italian unification. In *The Leopard*, Visconti shows the dissolution of the aristocracy with sympathy and understanding for the aesthetic and intellectual qualities that he, as an aristocrat himself, so deeply appreciated. The Prince's demise is a metaphor for the decline of the aristocracy. Death images pervade the film as the Prince stoically witnesses the end of an era. The Prince, played by Burt Lancaster, summarizes the views of the fading aristocracy when he dismisses fears of revolution with his belief that the rising middle class is actually interested in becoming part of the system. The Prince offers a perfect definition of the fatalistic concept of *trasformismo* originally coined by one of the first prime ministers of unified Italy, Depretis, that the more things may change the more they actually remain the same. The film ends with a grand ball for the announcement that the Prince's nephew (Alain Delon) will marry Angelica (Claudia Cardinale), the beautiful and rich daughter of the *nouveau riche* social climber Don Calogero. The ball sequences show Visconti's extreme attention to historical detail and minutely lavish reconstruction of nineteenth-century artifacts. These scenes were reproduced with extravagance and self-indulgence in a complete departure from the neorealist style, and evidence Visconti's ability to give cinematography the same sort of high artistic power usually identified with painting or opera.

Visconti's *La caduta degli dei-Gotterdammerung/The Damned* (1969) with its Italian title referring to a Richard Wagner opera, chronicles the rise of Nazism in Germany through a study of the moral perversity of the Essenbeck clan, modeled after the Krupp family of armaments manufacturers. Visconti connects Nazism and sexual perversion, a point explicitly conveyed through a recreation of the *night of the long knives* when Hitler's SS purged the Nazi movement of its SA rivals. Visconti's *Morte a Venezia/Death in Venice* (1970) is based on the Thomas Mann short novel about a middle-aged man who remains in Venice during the cholera outbreak that will claim his life in order to ogle a Polish boy at the Lido beach. *Death in Venice* deals with the decadence of an individual, Whereas Visconti's next films deal's with the decadence of an entire family, *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno/Conversation Piece* (1974) and of an era, *L'innocente/The Innocent* (1976). *Conversation Piece* depicts the life of an Italian family in contemporary society and creates a rather bleak view of modern life, plagued by lack of communication, drug addiction, and political terrorism. Visconti's last film, *The Innocent*, is an adaptation of a story by Gabriele D'Annunzio in which a nobleman kills his wife's illegitimate newborn before committing suicide in a study of *fin-du-siecle* aristocratic society bound to self-destruction.

Federico Fellini

Fellini went from being Aldo Fabrizi's gagman and a screenwriter on Rossellini's neorealist film *Open City* (1945) to become an art cinema director. With its glamor kitsch and emphasis on contemporary consumerism, Fellini's *La dolce vita* (1960) is a sociological portrait of 1960s economic boom Italy. The film is divided into episodes that offer a journey through Roman society from the world of the jaded celebrity journalist Marcello, to the decadence of the Roman aristocracy and the banality of late night prostitution. *La dolce vita* caused scandal due to its striptease sequence, which heightened its box office appeal. In this vein the film is party to the erotic genre of the period, such as the Brigitte Bardot films directed by Roger Vadim in France or Alessandro Blasetti's *Europa di notte/Europe by Night* (1959) box office hit, which offered a glimpse into the world of European striptease parlors. *La dolce vita* is also remembered for the manner in which the stars Marcello Mastroianni and Swedish bombshell Anita Ekberg communicated a sense of Italian fashion to a world audience. The film contributed ot the English language through the reference to the scandal photographer Paparazzo whose name refers to celebrity photographers to the present day.

Fellini followed *La dolce vita* with one of his most autobiographical films, *8½* (1963). Fellini had previously made six feature length films and had contributed "half" segments to three others, so he considered *8½* as his eighth-and-a-half film. The protagonist is a film director who can no longer decide what films to make, a crisis connected to his problematic relationships with three different women: his wife, his mistress, and an angelic fantasy figure played by Claudia Cardinale. The story jumps rapidly from present to past, from reality to dream and fantasy as Fellini addresses the authoritarianism of the Roman Catholic Church and its effects on adolescents, the absurdity of the world of film production, and the paradox of living between reality and illusion. The film ends where it began; with a parade of characters performing at the director's whims.

Similar themes are present in Fellini's *Giulietta degli spiriti/Juliet of the Spirits* (1965), a film that puts the themes of middle-class alienation from Rossellini's *Europa '51* and Antonioni's *L'Avventura* into the style of spaghetti nightmare horror films. Giulietta is a middle-aged married woman faced with her husband's extramarital affair. She undergoes a series of traumatic experiences: spiritual séances, encounters with phony oriental prophets, outings with her oversexed, stunningly beautiful neighbor, and haunting by her inner ghosts. These latter include an overpowering mother figure, a beloved, rebellious grandfather, archaic figures, and Catholic martyr nightmares. Eventually, Giulietta chases away her ghosts to face the outside world.[2] Though Giulietta arrives at a certain sense of wisdom, there is a fatalistic realization that little will change for her.

Toby Dammit (1967) is Fellini's short film based upon Edgar Allan Poe's short story *Never Bet the Devil Your Head*, which appeared in the multi-director effort *Spirits of the Dead*. Fellini's contribution is a parody of many of the currents in film in the 1960s: horror, pornography, westerns, and art cinema. Fellini had already parodied the Italian film industry's reliance on the *maggiorata fisica* actresses such as Anita Ekberg and the Hercules series peplums starring American strongman

Steve Reeves in *La dolce vita*. In *Toby Dammit*, Terrence Stamp plays a dipsomaniac English actor suffering from visions of the Devil as a little blond girl chasing a large white ball. Toby has been cast as Jesus in the first Catholic western in which the Savior returns to the desolate, violent plains of the American west with a plot reminiscent of Fyodor Dostoevsky's short story, *The Grand Inquisitor*. Fellini takes aim at the world of film theory influential in the mid-1960s in the sequence when the producers' representative, Father Spagna (many so-called spaghetti westerns were filmed in Spain), introduces Toby to the directors who explain the theoretical basis for their film project as Fellini's camera scans his artificially re-created Roman streets. Fellini parodies film theory when the directors offer a quick synopsis of the theoretical grounding of their film: Roland Barthes's textual analysis, Georg Lukac's Marxist social determinism, the Hollywood montage style of Fred Zinneman—the director of the Gary Cooper western *High Noon* (1952). Toby finally performs the nihilistic soliloquy "Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow" from *MacBeth* at Fellini's surrealistic re-creation of an Italian film award banquet.[3]

Fellini extended his parodies of popular genres to the peplum with *Satirycon* (1969), a disturbing, dreamlike vision of the fragmentary classical tale by classical author Petronius, which Fellini turns into a cautionary tale about the decline of ancient Roman society with the expressionistic style of a horror film. *Clowns* (1970) is a semi-documentary that discusses the disappearance of the clown as an entertainment phenomenon. With *Roma* (1971), Fellini repeated the autobiographical themes he had explored in *81/2* with an episodic film about the Italian capital that contrasts Fellini's memories of the city when he first arrived in the Fascist period with his impressions as a middle-aged director. For Fellini, Rome is not just a city, but a second home, a mother, a depository of ancient mysteries and current decadence, of filth, life, death, and renewal. After an enigmatic cameo of Anna Magnani, the film ends with an apocalyptic and ironic sequence about a new horde of scooter riding barbarians returning as if to sack Rome one more time.

Michelangelo Antonioni

Michelangelo Antonioni began as a critic in the Italian professional cinema of the 1940s and made neorealist style documentaries in the late 1940s including *Nettezze Urbane/N.U.* (1948), a faithful account of a day in the life of city garbage collectors. Antonioni brought the documentary long-shot camera style to his early feature films *Story of a Love Affair* (1950) and his docudrama about troubled youth in Europe *I vinti/The Vanquished* (1952). He gained international acclaim with *L'Avventura* (1959), the story of a group of wealthy vacationers who cannot find one of their party, Anna.[4] *L'Avventura* was censored in several countries and its projection suspended for six months in Milan for "obscenity" because of scenes of actresses undressing in front of the camera. In the film the only information that spectators have about Anna before her mysterious disappearance is that she is involved romantically with Sandro, and hers is the first female body seen undressing on screen. Otherwise she remains an enigmatic character whose disappearance offers an unanswerable philosophical parable regarding existence. The film became

emblematic of art cinema for the manner in which Antonioni challenged the stylistic and narrative conventions of commercial cinema. His extended long shots and narrative without closure were in opposition to the Hollywood model.

Other Antonioni films include *La Notte/The Night* (1960), the story of a novelist suffering from writer's block who is also dissatisfied in his marriage. Antonioni expertly employs the setting of an all night party against the anonymous backdrop of industrial Milan as a metaphor for the estrangement between the film's protagonists. *L'Eclissi/The Eclipse* (1961) examines themes of alienation and separation from the natural world, a theme continued in *Deserto rosso/Red Desert* (1964). Antonioni has a reputation for being more sensitive to women's issues than Visconti or Fellini. His trilogy of solitude, however, and especially *L'Avventura* and *The Eclipse*, reveals an equally male-dominated handling of the female image. Yet Antonioni also made films that questioned the essence of reality with *Blow-Up* (1966) set in the London of the swinging 1960s, which features a cameo of rock guitarist Jimmy Page playing with rock group the Yardbirds. The film is a murder mystery in which the existence of a chance photograph of the murder scene by a callow English fashion photographer begs questions about the perception of reality. Antonioni continued to experiment with new narrative approaches with his film on youth rebellion in the Sam Shepard scripted *Zabrieskie Point* (1970) and the Peter Wollen scripted *Professione: Reporter/The Passenger* (1975) starring Jack Nicholson in an enigmatic story about a man who assumes the identity of another, filmed in a style that was the height of the long-shot art cinema style to reach commercial theaters. Antonioni has remained sporadically active in later years with the historical film *Il mistero di Oberwald/The Oberwald Mystery* (1980) as well as *Identificazione di una donna/Identification of a Woman* (1982) and *Beyond the Clouds/Al di là delle nuvole* (1995).

Vittorio De Sica

De Sica's career as an actor spans over 150 films from his appearance as a distinguished gentleman in the silent *The Clemenceau Affair* (1917) to his final role as the Greek god Zeus in *Ettore lo fusto/Hector the Mighty* (1975). De Sica's contributions as performer, composer, and director made him a foundational figure in Italian popular cinema from the 1930s until the 1970s. Despite his monumental contributions to world cinema with such masterpieces as *Ladri di biciclette/The Bicycle Thief* (1948) and *Umberto D.* (1952), De Sica's prestige as a director never fully recovered from the commentary of Italian critics such as Guido Aristarco who disdained De Sica's abandonment of the socially progressive themes of neorealism for the more commercial cinema of Sophia Loren vehicles in the 1950s and 1960s: *Ieri, oggi e domani/Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (1963).

Despite his abilities and popularity, De Sica struggled to find producers for his projects as he opted to participate in some unmemorable films in the 1960s and 1970s. De Sica once remarked that only the films he produced himself were worthy of his talents and, "Only my bad films made money. Money has been my ruin."[5] In this regard De Sica had a career similar to his American counterpart

Orson Welles, whose struggles with producers were legendary. Yet De Sica's later career included important literary adaptations such as the Alberto Moravia novel *Two Women* (1960), the Eduardo De Filippo play *Marriage, Italian Style* (1964), and the Giorgio Bassani story *Il giardino dei Finzi-Contini/The Garden of the Finzi Contini* (1970). De Sica also retained an eye for the pulse of his times with the popular films *Ieri oggi domani/Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (1963) and *I Girasoli/Sunflower* (1970), as well as attempts to understand the changing times of the 1960s with *Un mondo nuovo/A New World* (1965) or his quixotic comedy *Caccia alla volpe/After the Fox* (1966) starring Peter Sellers. This last film lovingly spoofs the fickle world of film coproductions and the pretensions of auteurism that had been treated in a more somber and pretentious manner by such directors as Jean Luc Godard in his Brigitte Bardot vehicle *Le Mépris/Contempt* (1963). At one point in *After the Fox* an aging Hollywood star played by Victor Mature asks, "What does 'neorealism' mean?" and De Sica answers "No money."[6]

Art Cinema Newcomers

The prestige afforded to Italian *cinema d'autore* directors, Fellini, Antonioni, Visconti, was adopted as a marketing strategy by producers to elevate a mass medium and attract an audience to art cinema houses around the world. The reputation of an *auteur* was dependent upon subtle interpretations and the critical reputation held by a director. Just as De Sica was somewhat held in suspicion by the critical tradition of *auteurism* developed in the New Wave period in France, other Italian showmen and actors who ventured behind he camera did not receive lasting critical acclaim as is the case with actor Nino Manfredi's undervalued autobiographical film about Catholic education and flirtation with communism *Per grazia ricevuta/Between Miracles* (1971)or his last directorial effort *Nudo di donna/Portrait of a Nude Woman* (1981).

Yet other Italian directors were able to enter the ranks of the art director "club." The movement away from neorealism was a generational phenomenon and extended to a new generation of Italian filmmakers. Films including Marco Ferreri's *Dillinger è morto/Dillinger is Dead* (1969), *La grande abbuffata/The Grand Bouffe* (1973), *Non toccare la donna Bianca/Don't Touch the White Woman* (1974), or Bernardo Bertolucci's *Prima della rivoluzione/Before the Revolution* (1964), Marco Bellocchio's *La Cina è vicina/China Is Near* (1967) were heavily influenced by the theoretical and stylistic model of the French New Wave as well as the rebelliousness driven by the coming of age struggles of the youth of the 1960s. New Wave directors, Jean Luc Goddard or Francois Truffaut, had in turn been heavily influenced by Italian neorealism, especially Rossellini's *Paisan*, which New Wave critic/founding father saw as a primal example of effective filmmaking.[7] Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* (1959) arguably has elements that recall De Sica's *The Children and Watching Us*(1943).

In the cultural context of the late 1960s, films began not only to show a rebellious and iconoclastic attitude against society and standard narratives but also to challenge hygienic and sexual norms, for example, Liliana Cavani's *I cannibali/The*

Cannibals (1969), Pasolini's *Porcile/Pigpen* (1969), Ferreri's cannibalistic farce *La grande abbuffata* (1973), and Sergio Citti's *Il minestrone* (1981). Italian art cinema into the late 1960s even developed a current celebrating decandentism in the tradition of such turn-of-the-century figures as Gabriele D'Annunzio. Directors heavily influenced by Visconti even flirted with themes that recalled the writings of authors such as Nietzsche who championed an absolute reliance on instinct and an exaltation of the irrational to defeat bourgeois values. Themes of sexual rebellion or drug abuse brought a sense of apocalyptic pessimism expressed in aggressive language and shock values. Nietzchean themes appeared in *Al di la' del bene e del male/Beyond Good and Evil* (1977) by Liliana Cavani.

In hindsight, innovations in Italian filmmaking came not in the art cinema but also in popular genres such as the *commedia all'italiana*, the Italian horror film and the spaghetti western. This was recognized by Fellini who made his own versions of popular genres—the horror peplum mix of *Satirycon*, the satire of the Italian film industry's westerns in *Toby Damit*, and the sexy comedy in *Amarcord* (1974). Fellini's closeness to the style of the horror film in *Juliet of the Spirits* is particularly indicative of the genre's influence upon him. Like the peplum and the western, the Italian horror film appeared at a moment of retrenchment for the Hollywood film industry during the early 1960s. At times Italian horror films, like spaghetti westerns, could featured a multi-linguistic cast, which did not trouble Italian producers since most Italian productions were made with post-synchronous sound, a hold over from the neorealist days that continued to be a common practice. To cite one example, *Profondo rosso/Deep Red* (1975) is an Italian horror film by Dario Argento that became a stylistic harbinger of horror films both in Italy and abroad. Argento had first achieved success with *Il gatto a nove code/The Cat o' Nine Tails* (1971) and later with *Tenebre/Unsane* (1982). In *Deep Red*, Argento's camera work and sets recall the sterile cityscapes of famed Italian surrealist painter Giorgio De Chirico (1888–1978). The incessant and repetitive piano motifs in the film would become established as a signature of the horror genre including the later Hollywood *Halloween* (1978) series. Other directors enjoying success in the Italian horror genre include Mario Bava, Riccardo Freda, and Lucio Fulci.

A film indicative of the technical reach and unpredictability of the Italian film industry by the late 1960s was Mario Bava's adaptation of the Giussanis' long-running comic book series *Diabolik/Danger Diabolik* (1968) featuring a ruthless and invincible masked criminal/terrorist and his blond bombshell girlfriend (figure 7.1). The film was produced by Dino De Laurentiis, who like a number of Italian producers, Carlo Ponti, Angelo Rizzoli, or Goffredo Lombardo, was able to command a staff of Italian technicians. The set design was by Carlo Rimbaldi, probably best known for his work on Stephen Spielberg's *E.T. the Extra Terrestrial* (1982). The sound track by Ennio Morricone features the guitar work of Alessandro Alessandroni. Director Mario Bava brought his abilities as a cameraman to the production with technical trick photography with painted glass photomats giving the illusion of extensive and elaborate studio sets in scenes creating a sense of 1960s fashion and drug culture. In an ironic sense, the economic tradition of frugality and inventiveness from neorealism was repeated in camp productions such as

Figure 7.1 John Philip Law (Diabolik) and Marisa Mell (Eva Kant) in still from *Danger Diabolik!* (1968).

Danger Diabolik. The film was dismissed by critics due to its contrived plot, which has a thematic precedent in the French *Fantomas* silent series, also remade in the 1960s. But the frequent recursion to extreme violence and disdain by the main character, Diabolik, for anything beyond his immediate self-gratification or the whims of his stunning girlfriend is indicative of an anarchist current in Italian culture and politics, which would surface with virulence in the 1970s during the explosion of terrorism in Italy. In *Danger Diabolik*, the protagonist destroys the country's monetary system and blows up the entire government complex to the point that the minister of finance played by veteran English actor Terry Thomas makes a meek appeal to the public to pay their taxes according to the honor system since all their records have been destroyed. The anarchist/terrorist undercurrent and the technical ability of Bava and his collaborators give the film an importance particularly in light of the later development of Hollywood adaptations of comic book characters to cinema.

Part of the appeal of art cinema directors was their willingness to experiment, to break narrative commonplaces, and to challenge censorship codes. However this iconoclastic urgency also propelled producers to cash in on the lower end of the market and attract spectators with a promise of taboo-breaking titillation not available on television. For every high brow film, such as the hugely successful *The Damned* by Visconti, the *Decameron* by Pasolini, or *Ultimo tango a Parigi/ Last Tango in Paris* by Bernardo Bertolucci, there were numerous films

such as *Decamerotica* or the current of Nazi sadomasochistic movies inspired by the box office success of Liliana Cavani's sadomasochistic Nazi recollection film *Il portiere di notte/The Night Porter* (1974) or Pasolini's *Salò or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975), which combined a Visconti like interest in decandentist historical settings with the shock effect of pornography and the horror film. Ultimately the inheritors of the art and auteurist film tradition in Italy, at least in terms of film distribution and marketing, have been such directors as Tinto Brass, who moved from making westerns to soft porn films.

Pier Paolo Pasolini

An important new voice in Italian art cinema was Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922–75), who began as a poet in the regional dialect of his mother's home in the Friuli region and then became a novelist before moving to the cinema with *Accattone!* (1961), a film about the brief career of a Roman thief. Pasolini also contributed to Fellini's *La dolce vita* (1960) and Bolognini's *La notte brava/Bad Girls Don't Cry* (1959), always taking inspiration from Pasolini's novels about the underbelly of Roman society, *Ragazzi di vita* (1955) and *Una vita violenta* (1959).[8] In *Accattone!* Pasolini mixes the sacred with the profane in a tale of a beggar/thief whose demise is accompanied by the high cultural signature of Bach's *St. Mathew's Passion* and framed by quotations from Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Pasolini was attracted by the cultural authenticity of poverty, whether in Italy or the Third World. Pasolini's nostalgia for archaic, pre-Enlightenment culture seems to recall French philosopher Jean Jacque Rousseau's (1712–78) idealization of the Natural Man or Noble Savage, themes he would develop in adaptations of sacred and classical texts such as *Il vangelo secondo Matteo/The Gospel According to St. Mathew* (1964), *Edipo re/Oedipus Rex* (1967), *Il decamerone/The Decameron* (1971*), I racconti di Canterbury/The Canterbury Tales* (1972), *Il fiore delle mille e una notte/A Thousand and One Nights* (1974), and a time travel film starring Totò, *Uccellacci e uccellini/Hawks and Sparrows* (1966).

Pasolini was also sort of a gadfly of Italian society at the time, a voice pointing out uncomfortable contradictions in contemporary culture. Yet he appealed to Italy's major political and cultural forces. He had claimed political alignment with the PCI, although he was eventually dismissed from the Party for his homosexuality. He also appealed to Catholic forces with his film version of *The Gospel According to St.Mathew* (1964), a spare and unadorned adaptation that remains on the Vatican's list of approved films, and publically announcing his opposition to abortion. In comments that echo the work of such media theorists as Marshall McLuhan, Pasolini pointed out the decline of regional dialects and culture, which he saw as being increasingly dominated by the homogenizing power of television and the technocratic influences of the industrial triangle in the north between Milan, Genoa, and Turin. These themes had a resonance among the Italian public in films such as Germi's top grossing, *Serafino* (1968), starring pop singer Adriano Celentano as a sheep herder who rejects modern life, or Monicelli's *La ragazza con la pistola/Girl with a Gun* (1968) starring Monica Vitti as a Sicilian girl who brings

her code of honor to the swinging 1960s of London. Pasolini voiced environmental concerns by decrying the effects of industrialization on Italy's natural environment in a famous article about the disappearance of fireflies from the Italian hinterland, an insect quite sensitive to air pollution.[9] Part of Pasolini's legend was his ability to cut through ideology in his social commentary. When students occupied the University of Rome in 1968, Pasolini expressed more solidarity for the policemen than the students. Pasolini noted that the policemen desperately trying to maintain order were mostly the sons of working-class families with little chance of attending college. The students on the other hand had for the most part been raised in privileged environments.[10] The potential conspiracy theories surrounding Pasolini's violent death allegedly at the hands of male prostitutes on a Roman beach in 1975 are treated in Marco Tullio Giordana's *Pasolini, un delitto italiano/Pasolini, an Italian Crime* (1995).

The *Ricotta/Cream Cheese* episode of the multi-directed *Ro.Go.Pag.* (1963) offers a synthesis of many of Pasolini's favorite themes, in particular the contrast between archaic Catholicism and post–economic boom Italy (figure 7.2). With *Ricotta/Cream Cheese*, Pasolini invents a film about a film production of Christ's Passion directed by Orson Welles, during a period in which Welles was having trouble finding producers for his films. In *Cream Cheese*, an extra playing one of the thieves to be crucified with Jesus on Mount Calvary actually dies on the cross on the set, apparently of a stroke provoked by the fact that he had not eaten lunch. With this character, as with the protagonists of *Accattone* and *Mamma Roma*

Figure 7.2 Still from Pier Paolo Pasolini's *La ricotta/Cream Cheese.*

(1962), a melodrama starring Anna Magnani as a prostitute who aspires to middle-class stability by seeking a raise in class status for her indolent son, Pasolini presents an ironic martyr for the cultural authenticity and primitiveness of the lower-class inhabitants of the Roman periphery. *Cream Cheese* lampoons the contradiction between the baroque imagery of stills for the Passion produced by the film crew and the Gospel's actual message of poverty and spirituality. In ideological terms, another instructive example of the infiltration of 1960s iconoclastic ideology in a Pasolini film is *Teorema* (1968), in which Terence Stamp plays a mysterious stranger who destroys the paternal order of a Milanese industrialist's household by seducing each member of the family.

Bernardo Bertolucci

Bernardo Bertolucci (1940–) started his film career with *La commare secca/The Grim Reaper* (1962) based on a story by Pasolini.[11] He also contributed to the screenplay of Leone's re-reading of the western *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968). But Bertolucci's breakthrough film was a re-examination of Rossellini's or Antonioni's middle-class alienation tales though the eyes of a male baby boomer in *Prima della rivoluzione/Before the Revolution* (1964). The film echoed the stylistic and narrative style of such French New Wave directors as Jean Luc Godard and established the young Bertolucci as an art film director. In the film a bourgeois youth considers rebellion and piddles with incest but eventually seems resigned to his heritage and destiny, a storyline Bertolucci would repeat in later films.

Initially Bertolucci seemed unable to move beyond the influences he took from this style of filmmaking. His next film *Partner* (1968) is based on a Fyodor Dostoevsky story, and *Amore e rabbia/Love and Anger* (1969) is an episodic film with contributions by Pasolini and Goddard, which exemplify the revolutionary and iconoclastic period in which they were made. Bertolucci's later films opt for a more expressionistic cinematography. He moved beyond the themes of rebellion, incest, and acceptance of class to examine Italy's Fascist past with an adaptation of Alberto Moravia's novel *Il conformista/The Conformist* (1970), *Spider Stratagem* (1972), *La Luna* (1979), *Novecento/1900* (1976), and the Oscar winning biopic of the last Chinese emperor Pu Yi, *L'ultimo imperatore/The Last Emperor* (1987). Bertolucci wisely relied upon the brilliant cinematography of Vittorio Storaro whose formalism extends to the point of using color-tinted lenses, a technique used in such Hollywood musicals as Vincent Minelli's *An American in Paris* (1951) and Joshua Logan's *South Pacific* (1958) later used by Storaro as cinematographer on *Apocalypse Now* (1979), Francis Ford Coppola's Vietnam-era adaptation of Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness*.

Bertolucci's most acclaimed and controversial film was *Last Tango in Paris* (1972). Bertolucci ably filled the film with numerous metacinematic references such as the casting of Massimo Girotti, a leading man from Italian film of the 1940s in such films as Visconti's *Obsession* (1943) and Germi's *In the Name of the Law* (1949), as an aging neighbor obsessed with physical fitness, a metacinematic citation of the decline of the star system of which Girotti had been a part.

Figure 7.3 Marlon Brando (Paul) and Maria Schneider (Jeanne) in Bernardo Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris.*

Bertolucci also features French director Francois Truffaut's alter-ego Jean Pierre Leaud, an actor who Tuffaut had followed from adolescence in *The 400 Blows* to adulthood in *Day for Night* as a cuckolded filmmaker. The film's river dock references recall Jean Vigo's houseboat in *L'Atlante* (1934), a film about a barge ship owner who is consumed with jealousy for his attractive newlywed bride. Finally Bertolucci cast Marlon Brando, an actor with a rich history in Hollywood cinema playing individuals suited to a life of action who are faced with a moral dilemma: *Along the Waterfront* (1954), *One Eyed Jacks* (1960), *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1962), and *The Ugly American* (1963). Brando was fresh from a series of box office disappointments including Gillo Pontecorvo's anticolonial parable *Burn/Queimada* (1969). In *Ultimo tango a Parigi/Last Tango in Paris* (1972), Brando's character mourns the suicide of his wife by entering into a relationship with a Parisian girl with whom he insists on sex without emotional depth, leading to further tragedy (figure 7.3). The film received zealous critical acclaim, including the hyperbolic enthusiasm of Pauline Kael who called it the greatest film of all time.[12] The legacy of the film is that it demonstrated the degree of change in sexual mores in a public increasingly open (or numb) to sexually explicit imagery. The film received an X rating in the United States and the negatives of the film were ordered destroyed by an Italian court in 1976. But by 1988 it was shown on Italian television with less than seven minutes of cuts and a mere warning against viewing by anyone under the age of fourteen.[13] The Italian public acceptance of the explicit sexual imagery in Bertolucci's film was a watershed in Italian cultural history. It would remain Italy's all time top grossing domestic film until it was displaced by Roberto Benigni's *La vita è bella/Life Is Beautiful* (1997).